

# SU People



Schmitt Shoolst

STUDENT

Rachael Gazdick |

## Advocating Social Justice

**RACHAEL GAZDICK '93 GETS FIRED UP** when talking about public education, poverty, health care, and labor reform. In high school, she enjoyed discussing such issues with her mentor, Robin Saile. "She was a remarkable teacher," says Gazdick, a speech communication graduate of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. "We talked about injustices in terms of race, class, and world issues. We thought differently about the world and our place in it."

More than 10 years later, Gazdick, a third-year social science doctoral student in the Maxwell School, continues to approach life as an active humanitarian with a glob-

al perspective. When not researching her dissertation, she's teaching social work or speech communication classes, or working as the assistant director of Hendricks Chapel's Students Offering Service (SOS). She is an alumni recruiter for Teach For America, and is the project director for the GeroRich grant, a program that brings together SU students and older citizens. Gazdick is also a strong supporter of SU's Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which she has helped with or attended since her sophomore year. "I consider it my homecoming event at SU," she says. "I believe in honoring the life of Dr. King and having

conversations on campus about the civil rights movement."

Gazdick's commitment to civil rights is just one part of her devotion to social justice. After college, she joined Teach For America and taught at an elementary school in a poverty-stricken rural town in Louisiana. She then earned back-to-back master's degrees: one in social work from Boston College, and one in education from Harvard. While at Harvard, she was a director for Citizen Schools, an after-school program for inner-city kids. "Inspiring children to reach their full potential is what I enjoy most," she says.

Gazdick returned to Syracuse in 1999 as deputy executive director and then executive director of the Near East Side Community Development Organization (NESCO), a nonprofit agency that assists residents with employment and education. In 2000, she left NESCO to pursue a doctoral degree at SU and work at SOS, where she chairs the International Young Scholars Program, a tutoring initiative for refugee children from Haiti, Sudan, and other countries. Robin Dean '04, now in her third year as a tutor, observes Gazdick in action every Thursday afternoon. "Each child has a different personality," Dean says. "Rachael tunes into each one and treats them as individuals."

Gazdick's devotion to children—and to humanity—recently took her to Capitol Hill, where she testified before Congress at a 100-hour national town meeting in support of funding for AmeriCorps, a network of national service programs, including Teach For America and Citizen Schools. "I believe so deeply in service as a way of life," she says. "It's a part of our being."

After making regular contributions to the MLK Celebration, working with young refugees, and finishing her third graduate degree, what will Gazdick do next? "I don't map things out," she says. "I try to live my life in a way that I contribute as much as I can to the world around me and engage in activities that are life-giving."

—Linda Ober





## Satomi Yaji | Cultural Connector

FOR MANY OF THE 2,300 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT SYRACUSE, Satomi Yaji G'02 is a true friend. A career consultant at the University's Center for Career Services, Yaji provides counseling services to students and alumni on career development issues and job-search strategies. "International students often face more challenges in their job-searching process," says Yaji, who holds a master's degree in counselor education from the School of Education. "They have to maintain their immigrant status and deal with cultural adjustment. It is very important that we provide career counseling to address these issues and help them plan their career paths."

Yaji, a native of Japan, became interested in counseling international students during her undergraduate days at Kyorin University in Tokyo. When her best friend from Sri Lanka was hospitalized, she realized how scarce the resources for international students were. "My friend was homesick and lagged behind in classes, and I wanted to be of more help to her," says Yaji, who studied the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language. "Although professors helped my friend with academics, there was a lack of resources to provide emotional support."

While an undergraduate, Yaji also worked as a tutor, teaching Japanese to non-Japanese students. "Talking to them made me realize I was interested in helping," she says. "International students spend a lot of energy and time studying and working in foreign countries, and they need help making pur-

poseful decisions." Yaji decided to come to the United States to pursue an advanced degree and learn professional counseling skills. "The United States hosts the most culturally diverse students," she says. "I chose SU because its counseling program best matched my interest."

Being an international student at Syracuse was a rewarding experience for Yaji. "It made me stronger, more mature, and more proactive," she says. "I still clearly remember days when I was hardly able to express myself in English and was extremely frustrated. But now I enjoy interacting with people from all over the world. These different perspectives and customs have challenged and educated me."

Yaji draws on her experiences to better connect with and assist SU's international students. Tarun Kataria G'03, a computer science graduate from India, says he is comfortable sharing his job-search difficulties with Yaji. "I don't feel like I'm talking with a career counselor," he says. "I am talking with my friend." He first met with Yaji last August after an unsuccessful three-month job search. "I was frustrated because I sent out 500 applications and didn't get a single interview," he says. "I was shocked when a computer company rejected my application, saying I had poor communication skills." Yaji encouraged him to make follow-up calls and practice his phone skills by recording and listening to his own voice. "I've started to get interviews now," he says.

Recognizing that cultural differences can detract from the effectiveness of the job-search process, Yaji is dedicated to improving the center's services and student programming for international students. She developed a career workshop series for them that covers such topics as networking, interviewing, communication skills building, and resume writing. She also organized diverse student focus groups to systematically research cultural differences. "International students often ask me questions like, 'If I have a strong GPA, why can't I find a job?'" Yaji says. "I try to explain these differences to them and help them adapt to the American way of job-searching. For example, networking is the most effective job-search strategy here."

Yaji also provides individual and group counseling to American students and alumni on career development and job-search strategies. "She is a very bright and talented counselor and has carried the heaviest load of counseling appointments among staff members for the two years she has worked here," says Michael Cahill G'87, director of the Center for Career Services. "We are rapidly becoming a global marketplace, and we will all need to work effectively with people whose backgrounds differ from ours. Satomi's background has helped the rest of the staff better understand and appreciate the experiences and perspectives of our students from other countries." —Wanfeng Zhou





## Abby Goodrum | Beyond Words

BACK WHEN LIBRARIES USED CARDS IN THEIR CARD CATALOGS, THE AMERICAN Library Association issued this statement on a new technology that was being promoted to its members at the 1964 New York World's Fair: "The computer is only a fast idiot. It has no imagination; it cannot originate action. It is, and will remain, only a tool." True enough, but what a remarkable library tool it is in the hands of imaginative people like Abby Goodrum, a professor at the School of Information Studies and a member of the board of directors of the American Society for Information Science and Technology.

Goodrum, who teaches courses on visual information retrieval and digital libraries, is currently studying how people find and use digital images in such professional settings as journalistic enterprises, medical institutions, and art museums. "Using words to retrieve images is no longer the only search option," says Goodrum, a former librarian at CNN in Atlanta. "Now you can use images to find images in what we call 'content-based image retrieval,' a method that perhaps maps more closely to natural cognitive processes."

As an example, Goodrum says, "Let's say you need some ground-to-air missile footage for a television news report. A text-based search might come up with hundreds or even thousands of descriptions of catalogued images in the library of a news organization, and you'd then have to check out each one. Now you can select or sketch the kind of image you have in mind—let's say the launch of a shoulder-fired rocket with smoke trailing—and use the drawing as a 'search term' to pull up the images that match your need most closely."

Goodrum, a sixth-generation Texan, worked for the Canon Corporation during the 1980s after completing a B.S. degree in radio, television, and film at the University of Texas. "One of our clients was NASA, which had visual material dating back to the early

days of the space program," she says. "Their photos, films, and videotapes were not easily accessible, and they were looking for a way to get that material into computers and then out again when needed." While Canon decided it wasn't interested in solving this type of problem at that time, Goodrum discovered she was, and decided to pursue solutions in graduate school. "I was thinking of studying computers or aerospace engineering," she says. "Frankly, I'd never heard of library science. I had no idea that librarians were professionals in organizing, storing, and retrieving information." Her misconceptions dispelled, Goodrum returned to the University of Texas to earn a master's degree in library science. She went on to the doctoral program in information science at the University of North Texas.

Last October, in partnership with two colleagues, Goodrum received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Studies to create a nationwide digital reference education initiative. The aim is to help prepare librarians, students, and staff to deliver high-quality reference services via the Internet. In a related grant-funded project, she is looking at the contrasting practices of libraries and museums in providing digitized images over the Internet. "The Internet has become an essential tool in library interaction with patrons," Goodrum says. "Digital reference allows the librarian to be just as accessible as the online catalog. Museums, which traditionally thought of their constituencies only in terms of physical visitors, are suddenly finding themselves perceived as Internet reference sources. They must prepare for this role or risk turning away a significant new source of patronage." With her help, they will.

—David Marc

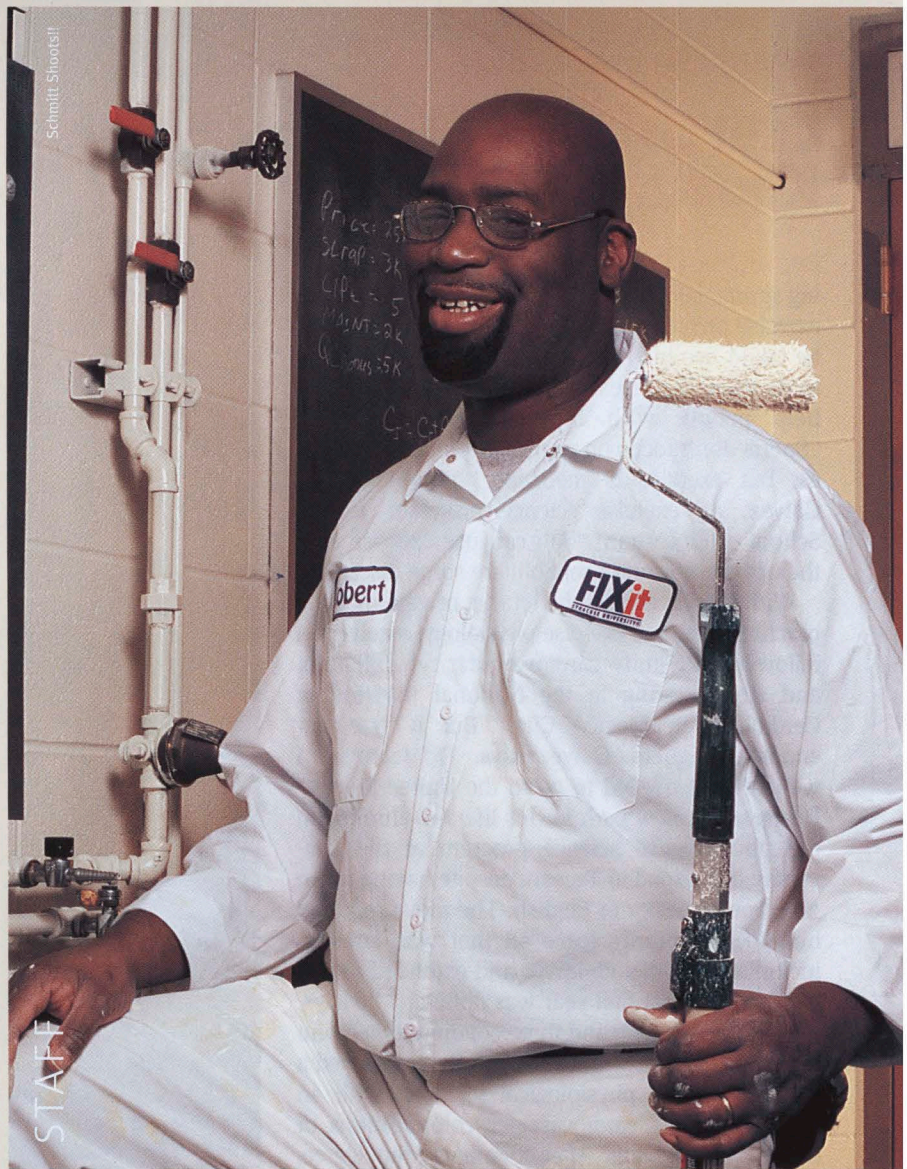


## Robert Ogletree | Painting with Pride

ONE NEEDS ONLY TO SPEND A FEW MINUTES listening to Robert Ogletree explain the intricacies of painting a room to know his passion for the craft. With an easy smile, he laughs about his early fears of climbing a ladder, then explains the complex mixing, staining, spackling, and patching techniques he employs to keep everything from the University's residence hall rooms to stairwell railings to window trim looking fresh and clean. "A lot of people think painting is just grabbing a brush and opening a can," Ogletree says. "But it's more of an art. I take pride in what I do because I love and enjoy it. Each day is a learning experience."

Ogletree has learned a lot since he was hired in 1980 as a cook's helper in Graham Dining Hall. After working his way up to head cook at Brockway Dining Hall, he was introduced to painting in 1991 through the Summer Paint Program, which offers temporary jobs to food service employees as an alternative to a three-month layoff when there's a slowdown at the campus dining centers. "I started working with the other painters at the University, and it changed everything," Ogletree says. "At first I thought, 'Are you crazy? You want to paint and get messy?' But seeing the dedication of my mentors—how they came in every day and loved their work—was inspiring. I was hooked." While continuing to work in the dining halls during the academic year, Ogletree spent the past 12 years as a Summer Paint Program crew leader, supervising dozens of other seasonal painters and beautifying hundreds of rooms across campus. "I can just train them to paint, but I want to motivate them to take pride in their work," he says. "That's something you can take with you even after a job is finished."

According to JD Tessier '75, G'79, director of the Housing and Food Services Maintenance Zone, Ogletree's attitude—along with his proven skill—earned him a painter trainee position last fall, when he was selected from more than 30 applicants to begin a four-year management training program. "He was an easy choice because he's spent the past 12 years working toward it," Tessier says. "He's become a shining example of what it means to be a mentor to others, and we're excited to have him as a part of our team." Last September, Ogletree left his position as a cook to begin the full-time training, which includes advanced painting, staining, and wall-repair techniques. In addition, Ogletree will



attend evening classes each semester for the next four years to hone his skills on blueprint reading, carpentry, wallpapering, and plastering. The training program will earn him the title of Grade A painter, the University's highest classification. "At this level, there's no room for mistakes," Ogletree says. "It's hard work, but when I leave a room I know it looks good, and whoever walks into it next will notice."

Ogletree's enthusiasm on the job is hard to miss. Rusty Tassini, maintenance manager in the Housing and Food Services Maintenance Zone, compares being around Ogletree to the pick-me-up equivalent of a cup of coffee. "If you come in tired one day, you only need a few minutes around Robert before you're ready to go," Tassini says.

Ogletree's energy extends to his personal life as well. He enjoys reading, helping his 11-year-old daughter with homework, and taking the family dog for walks. An avid philatelist and numismatist, he constantly adds to his collection of stamps and coins from around the world. Yet even in his spare time, Ogletree is never far from the work he loves. "I'm beautifying my own home little by little," he says, noting with pleasure that his wife approves of the rooms he has completed so far. "I tell you, my house looks good." —Kate Gaetano



Arturo Figueroa-Galvez

## Exercising Knowledge

**DR. ARTURO FIGUEROA-GALVEZ WAS PRACTIC-**ing sports medicine in Mexico when he visited an exercise physiology lab in Leon City and realized he could use his knowledge and love of exercise to do more than treat athletes' injuries. He could help people with life-threatening illnesses. "Sports don't focus on exercise for health purposes, but exercise is medicine," says Figueroa-Galvez, an exercise science professor in the School of Education. "You can use exercise as a therapy to prevent or rehabilitate some diseases."

With this revelation, he left his private medical practice to pursue exercise physiology, receiving a fellowship to study cardiovascular rehabilitation and stress testing at the National Institute of Cardiology in Mexico City. "But it was not enough," Figueroa-Galvez says. "To learn all I wanted to, I needed to go to the United States." He created a new path for his life and enrolled in the physiological science program at the University of Arizona in Tucson, despite having taken only one semester of English. The move required him to temporarily leave all that was familiar, including his wife, children, and extended family in Mexico. "That first year was difficult," he says.

But soon his wife and three children joined him in the United States and Figueroa-Galvez earned a Ph.D. degree in physiological sciences, with an expertise in the cardiovascular complications of obesity and diabetes. After completing the degree, he intended to return to Mexico to resume a position as a professor of medical and exercise physiology at the Universidad Autonoma de Sinaloa. Instead, he accepted a position at the School of Education. "I didn't know much about the Northeast of America," says Figueroa-Galvez. "We arrived in August, and it was cold for us. In my hometown of Culiacan, temperatures exceed 100 and it's very humid." Now, three years later, his family has warmed to Central New York, even the harsh winters, and he feels at home working with colleagues in the Department of Exercise Science.

Figueroa-Galvez shares his knowledge of exercise metabolism and testing, body composition and obesity, and drug education with SU students instead of patients. Although he doesn't practice medicine in the United States, his medical experience strengthens his ability to teach students and conduct his current research on Type 2 diabetics and obese women. "Because of his medical background and research training, Arturo brings a different aspect to the table that is extremely beneficial to our department," says Professor Bo



Fernhall, chair of the exercise science department. "The graduate students, in particular, enjoy his unique insights and abilities. He has helped contribute to some of our department's newest directions."

Figueroa-Galvez would like to see the department become more involved in outreach with campus and community members. During the summer he works at Healthworks, a fitness facility on campus for faculty and staff members. Through Healthworks he and other faculty and graduate students in the exercise science department offer assistance in creating individualized exercise programs and discuss the health benefits of such workouts. "As members of the exercise science department, we could provide more advising, not just to the people who participate in our studies and Healthworks, but to the general public as well," he says.

In the meantime, he gains great satisfaction in helping his research subjects, who are struggling with diabetes and obesity, begin an exercise program toward healthier lives. "Many of our subjects have learned that exercise will help them control not just their body weight, but also their body composition—muscle, fat, and bone," he says. "Exercise can be a strong factor in the prevention and rehabilitation of chronic diseases associated with physical inactivity, as well as in successful aging." —Margaret Costello



Joy Mutare

## Passion for Africa

WHETHER SHE'S STRIVING FOR PERSONAL goals or pushing to make a difference in the world, Joy Mutare has a gift for tackling the impossible with elegance and determination. A 32-year-old native of Zimbabwe, Mutare made the difficult decision to temporarily leave her now 2-year-old son in her mother's care while she pursues a master of business administration degree at the Martin J. Whitman School of Management. "It's been a challenge and a growing experience," says Mutare, who is also working toward a certificate in public administration from the Maxwell School. "I really struggled at first. The coursework was tough and there was a lot of it. I had no job. I missed my child. And I sometimes felt intimidated because I was the only African and the only black woman in my classes."

Graduate study is crucial to Mutare, who wants to return to Zimbabwe and put her education to good use—discovering ways to improve her country's grave economic situation and ease the suffering of Africa's growing AIDS orphan population. Supported by her family and friends, as well as SU's Division of International Programs Abroad (DIPA), she found the emotional and financial resources to remain in the program, which she will complete in May. DIPA associate director Suzanne Shane '76, G'81 was impressed with Mutare from their first meeting. "I instantly related to her idealism, energy, and faith in what she could do for her home country with the education she would receive at SU," Shane says. "Joy creates waves of positive energy with all her activities. She is generous, altruistic, and self-disciplined about moving her ambitious agendas forward."

Mutare, who earned a bachelor's degree in business studies from the University of Zimbabwe and worked for five years at a New York City broadcasting company before her son was born, always intended to complete an M.B.A. program. "My passion is for nonprofit work," she says, "where there is a direct relationship between what I am doing and the results achieved. There is a feeling of making a difference, of doing something that matters." Wanting to gain nonprofit management experience before enrolling in the public administration program at Maxwell, Mutare arranged an internship at Hospice of Central New York last summer. While working at the center, she shadowed the CEO and made recommendations regarding the agency's strategic management plan. She also helped coordinate a screening of *A Closer Walk*, an international documentary about AIDS that was presented as a fund-raiser for AIDS Community Resources and



the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa. "So many children are affected by AIDS," says Mutare, citing sobering statistics about the number of African children who have HIV/AIDS or have been orphaned by it. "I have always loved children, and now that I have my own child it hurts me even more to see children suffer."

Although Mutare isn't sure yet exactly how she will use her education to improve the situation in Zimbabwe, she plans to continue her studies and earn a Ph.D. degree, concentrating in social policy. "I want to return to Zimbabwe and teach the girl child, who I think is the hope of Africa, and yet is most vulnerable right now," she says.

Her long-range goals are focused on developing a support system for people with AIDS, modeled after a program she witnessed as a volunteer with Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City. "The structure there is something I would love to see in Zimbabwe," she says. "It's a building they can come to for medication, support, counseling, and protection. It is also a place that advocates policy changes for them." But Mutare—who received an Unsung Hero Award at SU's Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, in honor of her support for people with HIV/AIDS—is reluctant to try to duplicate those efforts in Africa. "There are already people there doing great work," she says. "I'm asking myself how I can help, and how my experience and all I've learned can be useful and add to resources already in place." —Amy Speech Shires